



VERMONT

AGENCY OF NATURAL RESOURCES  
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

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**Health Department Updates Health Advisory for PFAS  
*State Expands Testing Plan to include 10 Schools in Pilot Project***

Montpelier, Vt. – The Vermont Department of Health has updated its health advisory for drinking water of 20 parts per trillion (ppt) to cover five per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS). PFAS are a large group of human-made chemicals that have been used in industry and consumer products worldwide since the 1950s. Exposure to certain PFAS may affect different systems in the human body.

The original health advisory was issued in 2016 following the discovery of PFOA in private drinking water wells in Bennington. Until 2018, the type of PFAS predominantly found in drinking water in Vermont was PFOA. In recent months, other PFAS – including PFHxS and PFHpA – have been detected in drinking water.

**Vermont Health Advisory for Drinking Water = 20 parts per trillion**

The health advisory for PFAS in drinking water now includes three more PFAS in addition to PFOA and PFOS. Added together, the levels of these PFAS may not exceed 20 parts per trillion:

- PFOA - perfluorooctanoic acid
- PFOS - perfluorooctane sulfonic acid
- PFHxS - perfluorohexane sulfonic acid
- PFHpA - perfluoroheptanoic acid
- PFNA - perfluorononanoic acid

Some studies show that these PFAS may affect growth, learning and behavior in babies and older children, lower a woman’s chance of getting pregnant, interfere with the body’s natural hormones, increase cholesterol levels, affect the immune system, and increase the risk of cancer. The likelihood of having a health effect due to PFAS exposure depends on how much an individual was exposed to, and for how long.

All five PFAS compounds now included in the health advisory can all be removed from drinking water with the use of carbon filtration and the standard test used to analyze PFAS in drinking water identifies all five compounds. With the release of this updated health advisory, the Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) has reviewed all current test results to determine if any residents and businesses are affected by the updated health advisory. The DEC has also confirmed that the point-of-entry treatment systems (POETS) installed are effectively removing all five compounds.

#### **Working with Affected Residents and Businesses**

With the updated health advisory, the DEC has reviewed all previous drinking water testing results and has notified the limited number of impacted locations in Pownal that may exceed the updated health advisory. These locations will be resampled and bottled water will be delivered to affected residents. POETS that have been installed in impacted homes and businesses in Bennington, Shaftsbury, Pownal and Clarendon remove all five PFAS compounds. If combined results of the five PFAS compounds are found to be above 20 ppt, the DEC will work with the property owner to install a permanent drinking water solution.

#### **State Launches Statewide Testing Pilot for PFAS at 10 Schools**

PFAS is often found in floor cleaning products, stripping chemicals, waxes, and polish that may be used to maintain flooring at schools. This week, the DEC will begin sampling at 10 schools to determine if PFAS entered the environment and impacted groundwater when cleaning water carrying PFAS was emptied directly onto the ground or into a school's septic system. This project is a partnership with the Department of Health and Agency of Education.

The school testing is part of the DEC's broader PFAS sampling approach. After the discovery of PFAS in drinking water in Bennington, the DEC developed the statewide PFAS sampling plan to strategically investigate numerous sources of PFAS. DEC officials have already tested several locations where PFAS was used including wire coating facilities, semi-conductor facilities, battery manufacturing facilities, and airports. The sampling report ([URL or located on DEC website](#)) provides an overview of the findings and offers a look ahead into additional work needed in the future.

#### **More information is available**

To find out more about Vermont's PFAS sampling plan and information for affected communities, visit the DEC PFOA webpage at <http://dec.vermont.gov/commissioners-office/pfoa/communities>.

For more information about health and PFAS in drinking water, visit the Health Department's website: [www.healthvermont.gov/environment/drinking-water/perfluoroalkyl-and-polyfluoroalkyl-substances-pfas-drinking-water](http://www.healthvermont.gov/environment/drinking-water/perfluoroalkyl-and-polyfluoroalkyl-substances-pfas-drinking-water)

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